

1112 Lorimer Road
Raleigh, NC 27606
April 16, 2003

Commissioner Kevin J. Martin
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20554

Goodman
Distribution Center

Dear Mr. Martin:

I am concerned about the proposal being considered in the FCC to allow entities to own unlimited number of television stations. My fear is that if the current cap of 10 stations is lifted, the commitment to local news and public affairs programming will diminish. We will all suffer if that occurs.

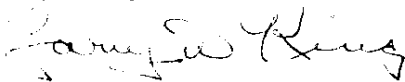
As you are no doubt aware, the Telecommunications Act of 1996 lifted most ownership caps for radio. In 1996, the two largest radio chains owned 115 stations, today they own more than 1,400. And the top five station groups now rake in 55% of all radio ad revenue. The typical radio news staff dropped from about 5 people to less than two. In fact most local stations no longer have a local news staff on hand.

As a member of Common Cause, I am concerned with the "money connection" in this push to remove the cap on station ownership:

- From 1996 to 2000, the 50 largest media companies and four of their trade associations spent \$111.3 million to lobby Congress and the executive branch.
- From 1993 to 2000, media corporations gave \$75 million in campaign contributions to candidates for federal office and to the two major political parties.
President George Bush received \$1.07 million
Al Gore took in \$1.16 million
- From 1997 to 2000 media companies took 118 members of Congress and their senior staff on 315 trips to meet with lobbyists and company executives to discuss legislation and policy preferences of the industry.
- The largesse is not just limited to Congress-- from 1995 to 2000, FCC employees were taken on 1,460 all expense paid trips sponsored by media corporations and associations-- costing a total of \$1.5 million.

Lifting the ownership caps will be harmful to local communities who depend on television stations' commitment to local news and public affairs. I urge you to vote against this proposal.

Sincerely,



Larry D. King, Vice-Chair, Common Cause North Carolina, ldking01@bellsouth.net

cc: Jim Goodman, CEO, Capitol Broadcasting Inc.

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120 Virginia Ave.
Sewanee, TN 37375
April 16, 2003

FCC Chairman Michael K. Powell
and the Commissioners
445 12th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20554

Dear Chairman Powell and the Commissioners:

I am a science writer and a professional journalist.

Regarding the upcoming FCC vote, further consolidation of the media in the false name of "deregulation" must be stopped, and serious attempts must be made to reverse it.

TV and radio news residing in the hands of just a few profit-driven corporations has undermined our democracy and threatens us with a "Brave New World" headed by Bush Inc., his board of directors, and associated spin jockeys and war salesmen.

The media companies have failed in their public trust to provide crucial unbiased information to the public about most public issues. As an American deeply concerned about our country's future, and member of the Fourth Estate, I call on you to break up the media conglomerates, to open the spectrum to a wide diversity of organizations and independent journalists, and to reinstate the Fairness Doctrine.

We just filed our income tax forms. It is disheartening that our tax dollars are mostly allocated for a down payment on Iraq. I know that other government agencies are suffering from this lopsided budget. I hope you have adequate staff to address the serious issues of media merging and its own lopsided result.

Sincerely,



Jill Carpenter, M.S., M.A.
931 598-0795

cc'd 

02-277

April 21, 2003

Chairman Michael K. Powell
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20554

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APR 24 2003

Dear Chairman Powell,

Distribution Center

The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) is currently considering sweeping changes to broadcast ownership rules. These rules are meant to ensure the American public gets a broad variety of news, information, entertainment, and political views. Repeal or significant modification of these rules would likely open the door to numerous mergers that could reduce competition and diversity in the media.

Before the media ownership rules are issued in final form, the public must have the opportunity to review and comment on any specific changes the Commission plans to make.

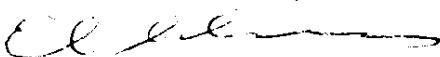
Most Americans get their news and information from only a few sources. If media ownership rules are seriously weakened, one company in a town could control the most popular newspaper, TV station, and possibly even a cable system giving it dominant influence over the content and slant of local news. Such a move would reduce the diversity of cultural and political discussion in a community. It could also increase costs for businesses and political candidates that use local media for advertising.

While the Commission issued a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking on media ownership, it proposed no actual rule. Accordingly, no public comment has been received on any specific changes. I believe that additional public input is essential in helping the Commission determine the pros and cons of any new approach.

I encourage you to provide a detailed description of all proposed changes, their empirical basis, and a meaningful period of time for the public to review and comment on any proposed changes before a final rule is issued.

Democracy depends upon a free and diverse media. It also depends upon transparency. I trust the Commission will do everything in its power to keep the decision process as open and inclusive as possible.

Sincerely,



Erik Gehring
8 Hall Street #2
Jamaica Plain, MA 02130

cc: [initials]

EX PARTE OR LATE FILED

02-277

Ms. Rowena K. Lieber
1302 South Highland
Berwyn, Illinois 60402
708 749 4460

April 6, 2003

Michael J. Copps, Commissioner
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, SW
Washington, D.C. 20554

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Distribution Center

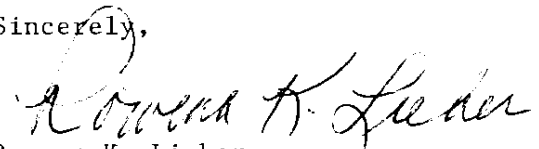
Dear Commissioner Copps:

The purpose of my letter is to encourage you to prevent the broadcasting companies (both radio and TV) from also being able to own newspapers.

In the first place, the news (media) is already extremely slanted and controlled. We don't want matters to continue in this direction. I believe that we can "thank" New Gingrich for a good portion of this problem. We need someone with the foresight and intelligence to reverse the trend which I see.

Your consideration is appreciated.

Sincerely,


Rowena K. Lieber

RKL

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David P. Kesling

251 Chippen Dale Circle

Apartment 922

Lexington, KY 40517

Email dpkesling@juno.com

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Confirmed

April 13, 2003

Mr. Michael Powell, Chairman
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street SW
Washington, DC 20554

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Distribution Center

Dear Mr. Powell,

The latest issue of *TV Technology* reports a statement attributed to Mr. Ken Ferree, FCC Media Bureau Chairman, saying that new rules concerning media consolidation will be issued on June 2nd. This is a hard date not subject to any slippage. He "follows orders". Regardless of any agenda mandating this initiative's enactment, further relaxation of the rules governing media ownership is a threat to Freedom of Speech in this country. These rules, in fact, have become too lax already and any revisions to the Telecommunications Act of 1996 should be in the direction of decreasing the concentration of ownership.

There are simply not enough independent media voices today and your imperative would aggravate the problem considerably.

I call to your attention one particular company, Clear Channel Communications of San Antonio TX. I've just visited their website and found that as of this morning, Clear Channel controls 1,225 radio stations, 39 television stations, and 776,000 billboards. In several published articles, Mr. Lowry Mays, the chairman of Clear Channel, has said as much as Clear Channel will not knowingly break the rules of media ownership, but *will* push those rules to absolutely their thinnest limit. In Central Kentucky where I reside, this permits a legal Clear Channel cluster of the most dominant radio stations in the Lexington market, but does *not* adequately address the true media reach picture. Clear Channel also controls the encroaching signals of 50,000 watt I-A WHAS-AM from Louisville, 50,000 watt I-A WLW-AM from Cincinnati and 50,000 watt WSAI-AM from Covington KY. I find it grimly amusing that another feature of Clear Channel's website today is the top item, "CC Expands Washington Office" illustrated by a picture of the U.S. Capitol building.

What is the problem? When these media giants: Clear Channel, CBS, Cox, Cumulus decide to adopt a corporate, political stance and use their unchallenged voice to influence public opinion.

On March 4, 1966, John Lennon made a statement to the *London Evening Standard* that the Beatles were more popular than Jesus. There was, to put it mildly, a firestorm of opinion against Mr. Lennon, both figuratively and literally... bonfires of Beatles records. More recently, Ms. Natalie Maines of the country recording group The Dixie Chicks stated her opinion of President George Bush from a London, England performance stage which, too, has ignited a firestorm of controversy, but with an important difference. The Lennon incident/reaction was widespread, but locally spontaneous; the Maines incident was orchestrated from San Antonio (Clear Channel) and Atlanta (Cumulus).

This is a not-so-trivial example of an emerging influence bloc that is beyond the wildest fantasies of William Randolph Hearst. Dark rumors are circulating of radio giants using their leverage to coerce performing artists to appear in certain venues or risk loss of national airplay.

Consolidation, such as you have proposed, further constricts the ability of dissenting opinion to be heard in this country as the channels of communication spring from fewer headwaters, a shrinking number of corporate boardrooms. What happens when (not "if") these boardrooms become increasingly politicized and exercise their communications muscle to the detriment of the American public? I continue to wonder how many politicians in

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this country would continue supporting these on-going consolidations if they realized the real possibility of being voicelessly on the wrong side of a media giant's wrath? I **can** envision a Manchester NH *Union Leader* having nationwide influence... and it frightens me.

I note with some sense of irony that California is now considering re-regulating their utility industries... that they are beginning to perceive perhaps a certain amount of **stewardship** is required when the public interest is been entrusted to you.

You must reconsider your stance on media ownership rules.

Sincerely,



David P. Kesling

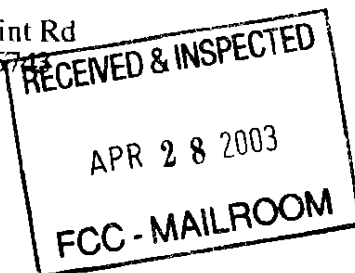
cc: Kathleen Abernathy, Commissioner, FCC
Jonathan Adelstein, Commissioner, FCC
Mitch McConnell, US Senator, Kentucky
Jim Bunning, US Senator, Kentucky
Ernie Fletcher, US Representative, Kentucky

I APOLOGIZE FOR NOT
INCLUDING YOU IN MY
ORIGINAL MAILING!
DMK 4/20/03

02-277

Chairman Powell,
The FCC
445-12th St. SW
Washington, DC 20554

609 Stoney Point Rd
Benson VT. 05743
April 19, 2003



Dear Chairman Powell:

I write to urge you to hold public hearings widely distributed over the nation so that consumers of our media can hear and respond to the changes you have proposed in regulations that will allow cross ownership of newspapers and television in the same community and thereby allow television and radio companies to control an even larger share of the market than they do now.

The diversity of viewpoints, information sources, programs, and events covered by commercial radio and television has already shrunk enormously in the past twenty years. The rate of newspaper mergers in the last thirty years has left, at best, one newspaper per market with few enough of those independent of the major conglomerates. We need more, not less, diversity if we citizens are to be the informed public envisioned by those who framed our Constitution.

The deregulation you propose is not in the best interest of any community. It deprives every person of the opportunity to hear, read, or watch, the full range of facts, thoughts, ideas and perspectives available. The uninformed, misinformed and under-informed do not have the opportunity to think and decide for themselves. That is the policy of dictatorship, not democracy. Please re-think your position and your proposal; but if you cannot do that, then at least let every citizen have an opportunity to hear all sides of the question in open hearings.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Jean W. Butman".

Jean W. Butman

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3631 Pine Street
Florence OR 97439
April 18, 2003

Mr. Michael Powell, chair
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th St SW
Washington, DC 20554

Confirmed

APR 21 2003

Dear Mr. Powell:

Distribution Center

I am writing to object in the strongest possible terms to your plans to relax ownership rules for American media. Your belief that the market should be the supreme arbiter in discussions over ownership of the *public* airwaves is supremely wrong-headed, and I urge you to change course on this issue.

Many of the Founding Fathers commented on the necessity of a free press; the system you are working to bring about will not be a free press, as those patriots understood it to be. With media ownership concentrated in ever-fewer hands, there is ample evidence supporting the argument that the American people are hearing a much less diverse range of opinions than just a few years ago. Rather than a free press, what I fear your proposals will bring to this great nation is a controlled lapdog press, timid to the point of worthlessness, and totally beholden to its corporate ownership. With that frame of mind at work in the highest levels of the nation's newsrooms, we the people will be cheated out of opinions that do not find favor in the boardroom.

Perhaps, as a resident of that culture, you would argue that there is nothing wrong with this approach. After all, you could echo the old journalism saw that freedom of the press "belongs to the man (or woman) who owns the press."

But there is a difference between a press owned by a publishing company devoted to discovering the truth, no matter what it might be, and a press owned by a corporation whose main objective is to spread a particular point of view. This is particularly odious given that the airwaves are a public resource, and there is precious little that the public gets out of it, in terms of debates on issues of vital importance.

Opinions expressed on television commentaries generally begin to the right of center, and go all the way to the extreme far right. I recall seeing one television political show where a columnist for the *Wall Street Journal* was introduced as the "speaker on the left of the issue." I'm sure you can recognize that this is balderdash. This country faces many issues that deserve the widest possible discussion of options—limiting that discussion over the public airwaves through a misguided belief in de-regulation does the American people, and the agency you serve, a distinct disservice.

Not at all rec'd
L. J. [unclear]

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I urge you to change course on this immediately. I would also ask that you extend the public comment period on the changes you propose, and schedule additional hearings on the issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "D. Peden", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

David Peden

cc: Sen. Ron Wyden
Sen. Gordon Smith
Rep. Peter DeFazio

02-277

Haron M. Cowell Ams.
185 Pine St #608
Manchester CT 061040

Michael Powell
445 12th St SW

April 02, 03

Washington DC 20554

APR 7 9 2003

Re: FCC Media Deregulation Distribution Center

Dear Mr. Powell,

I am writing to express my opposition to the deregulation of media centers by the FCC. I am extremely concerned that deregulation will result in a loss of honest reporting and the end of democratic expression in the media.

The American people need to be able to make independent decisions about societal issues. Without an ample variety of voices in the media, we will not be able to discern truth.

We do not want major corporations dictating what is viewed by the American public. We do not need bigger and better programs. We need simple truth.

Please, Mr. Powell, consider what is truly in the best interest of our democratic nation. Think about the needs of the American people and not the pocket books of the large corporations. You have the power to ensure our democracy. Please vote against the deregulation of the media.

Sincerely,

Haron M. Cowell Ams.